

MAXSON (E.S.)

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AGAINST ATHEISM.

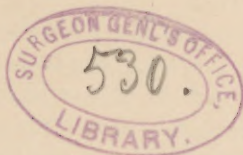
BY
E. S. MAXSON, M. D.,
SYRACUSE, N. Y.

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Common sense
reverses conceit -







THE HUMAN BODY AGAINST ATHEISM.*

BY E. S. MAXSON, M. D.,

SYRACUSE, N. Y.

MR. PRESIDENT AND FELLOWS OF THE ACADEMY: The subject that I have chosen is somewhat out of the ordinary line of topics presented here, yet I trust that the digression should not meet with disapproval.

I believe that the atheist carries in his own person the refutation of the philosophy that he professes to hold.

We know intuitively that every effect must have a cause.

It also appears that a design must necessitate a designer. Let us consider some of the evidences of design presented by the human body.

In the first place, it is a noteworthy fact that man is in a large measure made up double—that is, he has two eyes, two arms, two lungs, and so on. In this we see an evidence both of design and of wisdom in the Designer. Normally, this double arrangement, of course, renders the body more efficient. At the same time it affords a wise provision, for on all sides we meet with cases where one member or one organ has been destroyed or disabled while its mate still

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remains of service. Thus one kidney is sometimes found doing the work of two.

The circulatory system furnishes many evidences of design. The arteries supplying the fingers were not placed on the front side or the back side of those members, where a sharp instrument would be most likely to sever them, but they were placed at the sides of the fingers where there would be the greatest protection possible.

While some exceptions are found, the uniformity in the position of blood-vessels in different individuals is quite notable; thus the surgeon is able to use his knife with a good degree of certainty. If the blood-vessels were distributed in an accidental way, with each person a law to himself, the surgeon might plunge his lancet into an artery instead of into an abscess. The anastomosis of the arteries was another wise provision, making possible collateral circulation in case the blood supply through one artery should be cut off.

It was something more than chance, also, that placed more valves in the veins of the lower extremities than in the veins of the upper extremities.

In the blood's property of coagulation we find a great provision for the preservation of life.

Then, again, the arrest of the heart's action might have been placed under control of the will; but, in that case, it is possible that the number of suicides would be much greater.

The bones of the body are constructed in such a way as to be at the same time both light and strong. The ribs serve as a wall and defense to the heart and lungs, while the bones of the pelvis are well adapted to support the abdominal viscera.

If the human body were without a designer, why might we not find the incisor teeth set in the back part of the jaws and the molar teeth in front?

Then, again, chance might have placed hinge joints, instead of the ball-and socket joint, at the shoulders. In this also we may be thankful that some thought was used in planning the human frame.

The hardest substance in the body, the dentin of the teeth, was placed just where it was needed.

The skin in the palm of the hand was made thicker than the skin of the eyelids.

The tactile corpuscles were placed on the palmar side of the fingers because they would be needed there.

The reflex action of the spinal cord is of great importance in protecting the body from injury. Also it should be a cause of thankfulness that the brain is normally one of the last organs to undergo atrophy from senile change.

It is desirable that deglutition may be performed in many cases where conscious sensibility and voluntary power have disappeared. Hence the act of swallowing was placed under control of the medulla rather than under control of the cerebral hemispheres. Also the protection of the glottis in deglutition is something that all can appreciate.

The eye and the ear both speak of a Creator.

He who designed the drum of the ear understood that there should be a vent to the drum, and hence we find the Eustachian tube. The external ear might have been made to consist merely of the auditory canal, yet we can not help appreciating the purpose and advantage of the cartilaginous expansion forming the auricle.

Then we have the eyeball, with its firm sclerotic coat, its hornlike window in front, its iris to regulate the amount of light, its chamber darkened with the chorioid coat to prevent reflections, the retina for the reception of luminous rays, and the lens by which the perception of the form and outline of objects is rendered possible.

And so, for a long time, one might continue to bring

forward evidences of design as shown by the human body. The evidence is sufficient to prove the existence of the Creator, the First Great Cause.

In the world there are atheists, and probably still more agnostics. The atheist does not believe in a God; the agnostic does not dare assert his existence; but the human body declares that there is a God.

